



“Gardyloo” (one word) was originally used as a warning cry by chambermaids as they threw the contents of their chamber pots into the street. It might have come from the French *garde à l'eau* which means *look out for the water*.

Why did editors of the past pick it as their magazine name? We have no idea. But we like to think that it reminds us to keep looking up.



gardyloo

literature & arts magazine

volume twenty-two issue one



The first **gardyloo** was
published in 1996.

It's as old as a lot of our
staff, and we like to think
that it's growing along with
us.

staff

Editor-in-Chief **Kathryn Walker**
Design Editor **Aereen Lapuz**
Managing Editor **Marina Shafik**

Assistant Design Editor **Katja Wisch**
Public Relations Manager **Isabella Lassiter**
Events Manager **Jasmine Matos**

Art Committee Head **Rachel Owens**
Prose Committee Head **Abby Bennsky**
Poetry Committee Head **Evan Nicholls**

Poetry Committee

Jayden Allis
Abby Bennsky
Kayleigh Bishop
Kelsey Brooks
Catherine Carson
Taylor DeRossett
Lauren Ferry
Lauren Glaser
Jonah Howells
Sarah Mlcoch
Jazmine Otey
Rachel Owens

Art Committee

Abby Bennsky
Kayleigh Bishop
Hannah Burgess
Taylor DeRossett
Maddy Eaton
Lauren Glaser
Jonah Howells
Gabi Johnson
Aereen Lapuz
Isabella Lassiter
Jasmine Matos
Ashley McDonald
Sarah Mlcoch
Evan Nicholls
Emily Setelin
Katja Wisch

Prose Committee

Kayleigh Bishop
Kelsey Brooks
Jonah Howells

Copy-Editing Committee

Abby Bennsky
Catherine Carson
Jasmine Matos
Marina Shafik
Kathryn Walker

Design Committee

Abby Bennsky
Kayleigh Bishop
Hannah Burgess
Catherine Carson
Lauren Ferry
Jonah Howells
Aereen Lapuz
Isabella Lassiter
Kathryn Walker
Katja Wisch

Special Thanks to

Paul Bogard (Advisor)
Laurie Kutchins (Advisor)
Rose Gray
JMU Media Board
College of Arts & Letters

colophon

This issue of Gardy Loo was created by staff members, using InDesign. The body font is Avenir Next and the title fonts are Caviar Dreams and Clinic Slab. The endmark is in Wingdings. Gardy Loo is printed using McClung Companies in Waynesboro, Virginia. Submissions were accepted from any JMU undergraduate and chosen by staff members using a blind voting process. Students were limited to three pieces published per issue. Staff members were limited to two pieces published per issue.

Contact us at jmuGardyLoo.org or jmuGardyLoo@gmail.com.



Tepeyolltl (screenprint) Luis Antonio Navas-Reyes

Letters from

the Editors

Dear Ecstatic Readers:

I realize you didn't pick this magazine up in order to read my Letter from the Editor. You probably picked it up because the cover art looks amazing—which is does—or because you love reading prose and poetry—which you should—or because you have a 7-page paper to write and you're trying to find any way at all to put off starting it for even a minute more—which, honestly, same. Or, just possibly, you may have picked this magazine up because you're an honest-to-God *fan* of Gardy Loo. If so, I love you and cherish you and want only good things to happen to you. Whatever your reason for grabbing this magazine, welcome. Enjoy yourself; we worked hard in the hopes that you would. Now, let me tell you a thing.

I took on the role of Editor-in-Chief not really knowing what I was getting in to, but knowing that I could handle whatever happened for one simple reason; whatever happened, I was the one responsible for it. And, to be totally honest, this semester has been a crash-course in how to handle things.

Have you ever heard of Murphy's Law, Dear Readers? I had to look up its history, but it apparently first came to light in 1949, on the Edwards Air Force Base, although the sentiment had existed long before 1949 under a different name. Simply put, Murphy's Law states that "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." This semester has been a trying, frustrating, amazing, enlightening case-study in Murphy's Law, that has cost me dearly in emotional trauma, stress, and both time and money—which I will be getting back, one way or another.

The reason I call this case-study "amazing" and "enlightening" is because it taught me a lesson I think I was sorely in need of. When something goes wrong with my cable, or my car, I have a guy I can call for that—usually my dad. However, when something went wrong with Gardy Loo this semester, I was stranded. Literally no one on the executive board has held their position before, our advisor is new, our credit card is new—hence the emergency expenditure—even our *printing rep* is new. No one was around who was seasoned enough to fix these issues for me. So what I learned was that if something went wrong with this magazine, I would have to fix it. I could no longer pawn things off on other people.

And it was scary as hell. I've cried, panicked, and yelled incomprehensibly into pillows more times this semester than I care to admit, but it taught me something. I had always assumed that I couldn't fix things, that I would always need someone else to do that for me. When that option was taken away, I learned that I'm not half-bad at fixing things myself—I got this magazine on the racks, right?

That's the lesson I want to impart on all of you, or at least those of you who are like I was and still kind of am—baby-steps. Guys. One day, something will go wrong, and you can cry and panic and scream about it, or you can just *get moving* and *fix it*, whatever it is. So if your car breaks down, or you think you'll fail a class, or you think you just can't do something, I want you to try something for me. Recognize the problem, take a deep breath in and out, roll up your sleeves, and get to work. Be your own hero.

Go forth. Best Wishes.

Kathryn Walker
Editor-in-Chief

iv.

Just like many others, I struggled with finding my place when I first came to JMU. I didn't know how the bus system worked or what clubs to join. Everything was so new, foreign, and intimidating. By some stroke of luck, I found my way to this magazine. At first, it was just something to try out—who knows, right? Fast forward into my fourth semester as part of staff, I became the Design Editor of a magazine that I have to come to love. It's probably cheesy to say "I found where I belong," but, through getting to see the talent of the students here at JMU and work with and get to know the wonderful people we have on staff, I'd have to say that's pretty accurate. I'll take this opportunity to say *thanks, Gardy Loo*. I hope that, during my time as Design Editor, I will be able to continue the work of those before me in showcasing the awesome, amazing artists and writers among us here. I'll try my absolute best to do so.

To all the readers, Hi. It's nice to finally meet you. Give our magazine a little bit of your time and let it take you to far-away places and into new worlds; you won't be disappointed.

Aereen Lapuz
Design Editor

This is my first semester as Managing Editor, but Gardy Loo has been a part of my life since my sophomore year here at JMU. I feel like I've grown along with this magazine, starting out as a general staff member—I was the annoying one who joined every single committee, even though I knew nothing about art or design. I had nothing better to do. My second year I spent as the Events Manager and a member of the Copy-Editing Committee, and now I'm here.

I've loved to read since I was a kid, and getting to read all of your pieces is the reason I initially joined, but I've done so much more than that in the past few years. Gardy Loo has taught me to appreciate styles of writing different from my own; it has taught me things about art and design that I never knew existed, and it has taught me to work with others to create something very tangible. Seeing my own work published alongside yours makes me happier than I know how to express.

Please keep submitting—whether it's your first time or your twentieth—and the nerdy-little-kid version of me will happily read and copy-edit every word you decide to share with us.

Marina Shafik
Managing Editor

v.

*Denotes a staff member

- 2 **Heirloom** Keith C. Williams
- 4 **An Imperfect Circle** Marina Shafik*
- 5 **Skin, Shoes, Teeth** Hannah Keeton
- 8 **Julius** Evan Nicholls*
- 9 **Joy Ride** Abby Bensusky*
- 12 **Hypnagogia** Julia Lewis
- 14 **Growth** Caroline Whitlow
- 16 **Past Lives** K.S. Robinson*
- 18 **Tragedy Informs Beauty** Catherine Carson*
- 20 **Afternoon Hike** T. Raya / **Life Lessons**
(From My Choir Director) Erin Dailey
- 21 **Habitus** Rishmita Aich
- 24 **10 of Infinite Sacred Spots on Earth** Hannah Keeton

- 28 **A Tribute** Claire Downey
- 30 **Rhetorical Panacea** Alex Pickens
- 32 **Evergreen** Lauren Ferry*
- 34 **Ode to My Flat Ass-ets** Taylor DeRossett*
- 35 **The Target** Keith C. Williams
- 38 **The Widow** Catherine Carson*
- 40 **A Death Man and a Mother's Hug** Sarah Koth
- 42 **Constellations** Hannah Keeton
- 44 **White-Out** T. Raya
- 46 **America, I Am** Sophia Laila Cabana
- 48 **Leftovers** Marina Shafik*
- 50 **Why I Didn't Stay Angry** Hannah Via
- 52 **Masks On** Erin Dailey

- iii **Tepeyolli** Luis Antonio Navas-Reyes
- 1 **Fusion** Molly Greenwald
- 3 **Empty Tube** Abby Bensusky*
- 6 **Erotic Flow** Rebecca Sullivan
- 7 **Untitled** Caley English
- 11 **Greedy Goat** Jackie Zerull
- 13 **Anxiety** H.T.
- 15 **Thought Wrong** Martha Hemingway
- 17 **Heart on My Sleeve** Kristen Woolard
- 19 **Bees** Aereen Lapuz
- 23 **Waiting** Emily Setelin*
- 25 **Patria Querida** Luis Antonio Navas-Reyes
- 27 **Lee** Jackie Zerull
- 29 **Squad** Paige Nuckolls

- 31 **Red-Winged Blackbird** Caley English
- 33 **Push and Pull** Rebecca Sullivan
- 37 **Eclipse** Addison Bryant
- 39 **French Flowers** Brigitte Criqui
- 41 **Mayan Blue** Luis Antonio Navas-Reyes
- 43 **Grip** Aereen Lapuz*
- 45 **The History of Nonsense** Sophia Laila Cabana
- 47 **Sacred Hands** Martha Hemingway
- 49 **Bozo** Emily Setelin*
- 51 **Astral Body** Addison Bryant
- 53 Art Series Preview

art

literature

table of contents



Heirloom

Keith C. Williams

For all my life, I could look out
and see, growing in our front yard,
against a thick electric pole,
an isolated, thorny bush
comprised of a bundle of twigs
that stretch taller and taller still,
so that the top of the long stems
stoop over like an old woman.

For most of the Virginia year,
the stems stay sparse, with only their
thorns to armor against assault.
But then come several weeks
in which this bush first buds then blooms
dense, layered petals that breathe out
a calm, silken, sweet fragrance,
and I think then of my mother.

She loved dear her mother-in-law,
and brought to this home a clipped sprig
of grandmother's pink-red roses,
to ever have her here with us.
Since she died before I was born,
a portrait, some stories, and these
are all that I can ever know
of that raven-haired matriarch.

Once exhausted, the smooth petals
are scattered in the warm, May breeze.
I see a time the bush won't bloom
for my mother, but will for me.
Further on to the next in line,
my daughter, son, or someone else
will have some days of blushing Spring
and then, too, think of ancestors.



Empty Tube (Digital Photography) Abby Bensusky

An Imperfect Circle

Marina Shafik

He had never been to a wedding, which I thought was strange. I had never been to a funeral, which I suppose was equally strange.

My community cherishes weddings: large, flouncy events where three-quarters of the guests haven't spoken to either member of the couple in years and more planning goes into the event than into the relationship. The bride and groom are donned with crowns and capes. The bridesmaids spend hours on makeup and hair; the groomsmen, minutes with their ties and their nerves.

His community grew accustomed to funerals. Sudden, violent deaths were too common for them not to be. Old age had no correlation with death in his eyes—that association is a privilege I never knew I had. When we sat beside each other in bed, fingers tracing absentmindedly on each other's hands, scrolling through our newsfeeds, I'd occasionally see new engagement announcements from people I no longer spoke to while he'd occasionally see obituaries for people to whom he could no longer speak. I'd voice my surprise at seeing a couple I never knew were together, and he'd briefly express sadness at a friend-of-a-friend's loss and move on. It was hard not to see it as apathy, but of course it wasn't. New life no longer had a strong effect on me, and death no longer jarred him.

The circle of life is not unbiased. How fitting it was for the first wedding he attended to be ours, and the first funeral I attended to be his.

Both ceremonies were decorated with the same flowers, at least: white flowers I can't remember the name of, but he had always made fun of the ascribed attributes the color white has attached to it—cocaine, corrupt politicians, hospital rooms, why purity? Maybe life and death have a sense of humor we are unfit to understand until we've experienced both. ○

Skin, Shoes, Teeth

Hannah Keeton

sick skin
like paper feathers
hung loose on shell-bone
the first time we met
we sang old ballads
i wiped a little tear of tea
from your mouth

the second time we met
you were dead
in a box i looked at your
empty body and yellowed
pearls and functional shoes

a boat sailed, men
cried i'd never seen that happen
before bagpipes moaned for you
i lost
a tooth among the grass eyelashes and
stone nametags



Erotic Flow (Relief Print) Rebecca Sullivan



Untitled (Fabric, Wire, Foam, Sculpey, and Cardboard) Caley English

JULIUS

Evan Nicholls

Farmer first, of mainly silver corn and soybeans, I remember my grandfather driving the Dodge Caravan into his stalks, the crop high, green, ready. He stepped out of the mini-van and ripped off an ear, turned it into the object of our attention. My grandfather taught me how to count kernels and measure his yields. My grandfather taught me how to ignore, for moments, the black millstone in his chest. But on the drive back, a naked cob in my hand, I wondered about the size of it; a bean, a bullet? How I would have liked to peel back the husk of him, number all the pellets and pick them out. How I would have liked to feed them to the horse Rolex, the shepherd dog Annie. Later, at the bottom of the farmhouse stair, I lied in secret and listened to him. He told my mother he was less. Said his pubic hairs had all washed out in the shower, said the wheatfield of his lower-half was all away and neutered. I watched out the dying window, the crows coming in darkly, the corona behind them turning mortal and fat, carob like a buckeye.

Joy Ride

Abby Bensusky

You stole a car. You stole a fucking car. You stole a fucking car and are driving across state lines!

"Get a hold of yourself," Bea said, out loud, fully aware of how insane she sounded. But her frantic thoughts weren't wrong and were only becoming more and more frantic the longer she white-knuckled the steering wheel in front of her.

What the hell are you doing?

Bea shook her head and wished her heart would stop racing in her chest. "It's making up for all the adrenaline that's gone to waste over the years," she heard her friend, Sean, say in her head. He would also say she was participating in a season finale of *Degrassi*, by stealing her parents's car and driving off into the night. "If I were really in *Degrassi*," she would have replied, "I would be pregnant or escaping a school shooter."

Of course, Sean wouldn't have said any of this because he didn't know about this. No one did. Bea herself had barely known about it until she actually had the car keys clutched in her hand.

She was mentally calculating when she would have to stop for gas when the texts starting rolling in on her phone. First, there was just one, making her phone buzz in the cupholder. Bea glanced down at it briefly but not long enough to see anything specific. Then another text came in, buzzing her phone again. Then another... and another. Bea had stopped looking at her phone by then, fixing her eyes on the road ahead of her, half-expecting a helicopter with a searchlight to appear above her.

Can you blame them? You stole their car!

Bea bit her lip so hard it felt like it might bleed and finally glanced down. The little notification bubbles were still popping up and accumulating too fast for her to read them, but this time she saw the name: Mom. Over and over and over again.

This is probably the most she's texted you in the past year.

That was true, and it made Bea wonder what had finally tipped her parents off to her dramatic midnight escape. Although "escape" might not be the right word, as her parents had never been like prison guards or any type of guard really. It wasn't their lack of control, but rather their lack of interest, that had led to this. So maybe it wasn't an escape, and it had been closer to 1:00 a.m. than midnight, but Bea could admit with certainty that it was pretty dramatic.

It had involved her waiting until the exact moment she heard her dad's tell-tale snoring from the room down the hall and then scurrying down the hall in her socks, her running shoes and purse in either hand. She had skipped over the squeaky third step and then hurried into the kitchen, grabbing a bottle of water and

exactly three granola bars from the pantry. She had swiped the keys earlier, back when she wasn't sure if she'd even go through with it. But in that moment, at 1:34 a.m., she was absolutely sure of what she was doing, and backed her dad's car down the driveway. She had left the garage door open, afraid that the sound of it opening in the first place might wake them, but she'd been driving for over an hour already. Why was her mom just texting and calling her now? What had made her realize that her daughter had stolen away into the night?

She glanced at the clock on the dashboard. It was almost three. She looked back up at the road, illuminated only by her headlights, and finally reached down and pulled her phone out of the cup holder.

Her mom wasn't texting her as frequently anymore, but they were pretty much all the same as far as Bea could tell, looking quickly from the phone to the road and back again. All short and not-so-sweet threats from her mom, asking where the hell she was and telling her to turn her ass around and come home.

Did she go down the hall to check on you? And you weren't there?

Her thoughts were slowing down, leaving the frantic energy behind and turning into guilty worries that made her throat tighten. She shook her head, trying to keep calm. Her mom hadn't done that since she was little, and even then it was only before her mom went to bed. She wouldn't do it in the middle of the night, much less for no apparent reason.

She was about to throw her phone into the passenger seat, intent on calling them in a few hours when the sun had risen—But before her phone could leave her hand, it vibrated again and she looked down. It was from her dad. "Please call us back. We just want to know you're okay."

"Fuck," Bea muttered, her hand running over her face. She suddenly felt very tired. She had meant for this to annoy her mother but hadn't really thought about her dad.

But you still stole his car.

"It's got better mileage!" Bea grit her teeth. Her thoughts were jumping from justification (*He's just as bad as she is. Worse, really, 'cause he ignores all the shit she pulls*) to wanting to pull the plug on this whole thing (*Just call him. Just let him know you're okay and that you're going to Aunt Sarah's house. He's just worried. You know how he gets*).

Bea let out a long sigh, wishing she had thought through this more. Suddenly, this whole plan felt very stupid. Why had she run away in the middle of the night? What was she—the protagonist

of a young adult novel?

So your parents don't pay any attention to you; so what? At least they don't beat you. At least they feed you and clothe you. You're just needy. You're ungrateful. You're being so damn dramatic!

"Shut up!" Bea shouted louder than she meant to. But it felt good, to feel her breath burn against her throat and rub it raw. "Shut up! Shut up! Shut the fuck up!" She went from shouting to screaming; high-pitched sounds that made her head spin from the lack of oxygen but gave her a high that had her heart pounding in her chest. "Fuck you!" She wasn't sure who she was screaming at. Maybe her parents. Maybe at herself. Maybe at her stupid thoughts that just wouldn't leave her alone, even when she tried to run away.

At some point, she screamed so hard that something in her chest snapped and she started sobbing. Tears and snot covered her nose and chin, staining her tank top. Her chest heaved to catch up with the screaming, but it was bucking and struggling under the effort as each new sob felt like a punch to the diaphragm. Her throat felt so swollen and choked—she imagined deep red rings looping around her neck, burning the same angry red she was seeing behind her eyes.

Fuck them!

"Fuck them!" She couldn't tell if she was thinking or screaming, but it didn't matter because her thoughts and words were one and the same: lost and angry and embarrassed for having come this far with a stupid plan.

A harsh, grinding noise brought her back to the road in front of her. She blinked quickly, trying to clear the fog and fuzziness from the screaming and crying. The car was drifting into the shoulder of the road. Bea gulped down another sob and sat up straight, easing her foot onto the break and allowing the car to come to a full stop.

She wasn't sure where she was or even what town the nearby exit would take her into. There was a sign about twenty feet in front of the car, advertising local attractions. Amongst the McDonald's and the IHOP, the one that caught her eye was "Naomi's Diner," boasting not only 24 hours of service but, apparently, the best hush puppies in the tri-state area.

Bea wasn't sure why she found this funny, but she found a small laugh bubbling up in her chest. She took a shaky breath and shook her head, running her hands down her wet face. Her

heart was starting to slow down, but she felt as if she had just run a marathon. All the adrenaline from the night had run its course and her eyes were heavy.

Her phone was still buzzing from its spot on the floor where it had fallen during Bea's breakdown. She let out a sigh, her breathing more even as time passed.

What now?

She didn't know. She had woken up this morning determined not to spend another day in her house, determined not to spend another minute being ignored by her parents and watching them make passive aggressive comments to each other. But now everything felt so rash and silly, and maybe if she could have just talked through it with them...

The whole point of this was to go to Aunt Sarah's for the summer.

Bea looked down at her phone and flipped to the map. She was almost halfway to her aunt's house. Another two hours. But she didn't have to drive those two hours in the dark. Without reading the texts from her mom, she flipped to the contacts on her phone and called her dad.

It only rang once before his breathless voice answered. "Bea!" He let out an impossibly long sigh. "Bea, where are you? Are you okay? What the hell happened?"

"Dad, I'm okay. I'm fine. I'm—I'm really sorry." Her voice broke but she refused to let any tears spill over. "But... I'm not coming home."

There was silence on the other end of the phone. Bea suspected her dad was in the guest room or maybe in the attic, but he definitely wasn't anywhere near her mom, because she would have ripped the phone out of his hands the second she found out Bea was on the other end.

Finally, her dad let out a sigh and said, "I went to check on you. And you weren't there."

Bea wasn't strong enough to keep the tears from falling down her cheeks this time. "Dad." Her voice cracked and she heard the mirrored sound of hitched breathing on the other end of the line. "Can you meet me somewhere?"

Immediately, there was scuffling, the echoing of keys jangling, and shoes being thrown around. "Yes. Yes, anywhere."

Bea looked out ahead of her and turned the key in the ignition. "How do you feel about hush puppies?" ○

A harsh, grinding noise brought her back to the road in front of her.



Greedy Goat (Screenprint on Stonehenge) Jackie Zerull

Hypnagogia

Julia Lewis

A knife-shaped spot of moonlight
cuts through the door I keep cracked
for the cat I don't have. I roll over in bed
and the spot moves to mirror me.
It waxes
—eating my bedroom wall like a great glob of paint—
then wanes to curl up
on my comforter and purr. I reach
to pet it, but it slips out the door,
restoring the dark.
I soak myself in stillness.
It feels like a murky bath
wrinkling my skin,
but then I smell the orange peels
burning in the wastebasket.
The room is on fire;
I sink into placid fever.



Anxiety (Oil Painting) H.T.

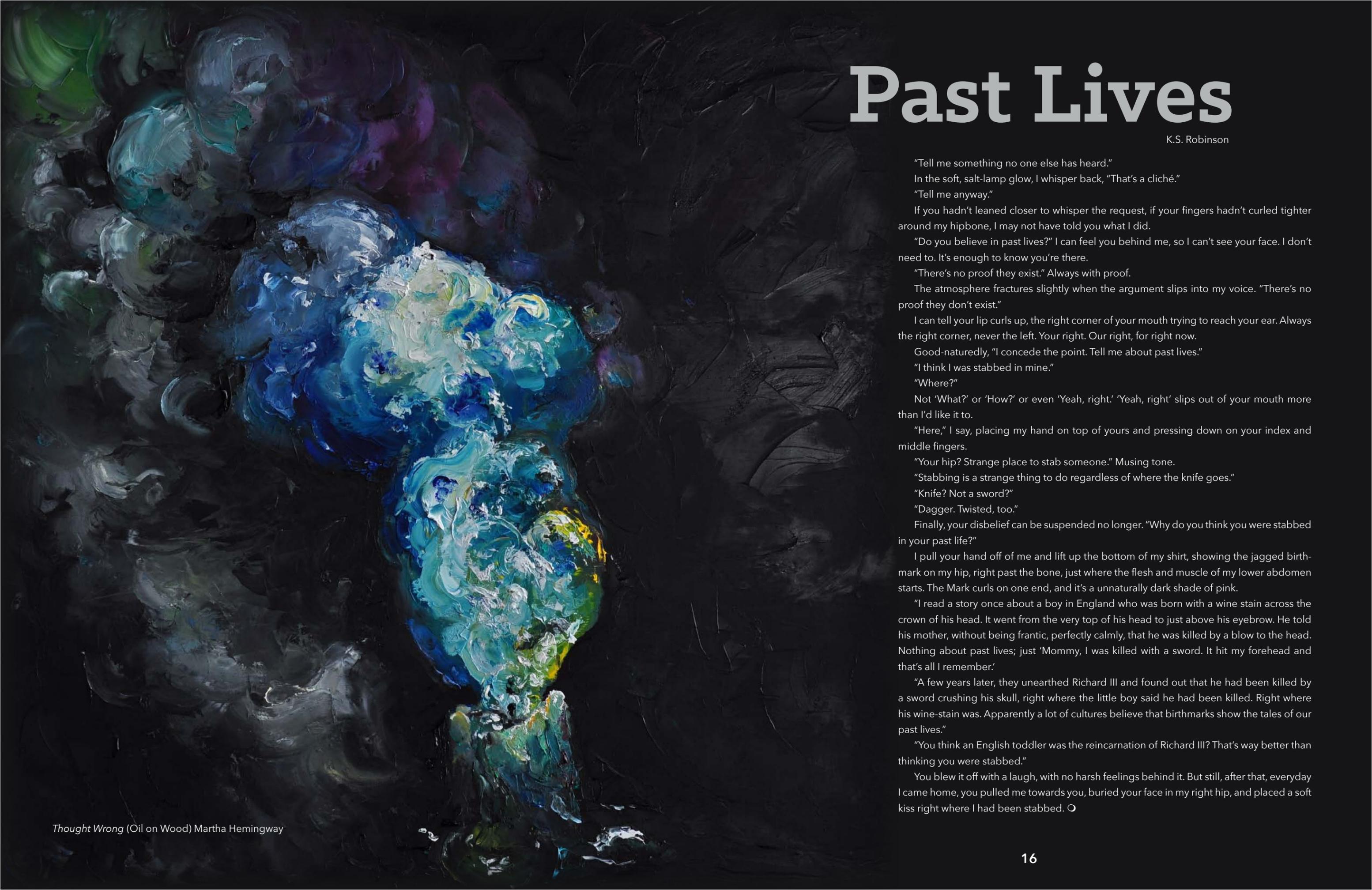
Growth

Caroline Whitlow

I have never grown tall,
and I have never grown wide.
But still, I have grown
like a jungle inside.

For when I was younger
and feeling so rushed,
I wished to be good
at all things that I touched.

But now that the jungle has grown in my head,
I wish to be good to all people
instead.



Past Lives

K.S. Robinson

"Tell me something no one else has heard."

In the soft, salt-lamp glow, I whisper back, "That's a cliché."

"Tell me anyway."

If you hadn't leaned closer to whisper the request, if your fingers hadn't curled tighter around my hipbone, I may not have told you what I did.

"Do you believe in past lives?" I can feel you behind me, so I can't see your face. I don't need to. It's enough to know you're there.

"There's no proof they exist." Always with proof.

The atmosphere fractures slightly when the argument slips into my voice. "There's no proof they don't exist."

I can tell your lip curls up, the right corner of your mouth trying to reach your ear. Always the right corner, never the left. Your right. Our right, for right now.

Good-naturedly, "I concede the point. Tell me about past lives."

"I think I was stabbed in mine."

"Where?"

Not 'What?' or 'How?' or even 'Yeah, right.' 'Yeah, right' slips out of your mouth more than I'd like it to.

"Here," I say, placing my hand on top of yours and pressing down on your index and middle fingers.

"Your hip? Strange place to stab someone." Musing tone.

"Stabbing is a strange thing to do regardless of where the knife goes."

"Knife? Not a sword?"

"Dagger. Twisted, too."

Finally, your disbelief can be suspended no longer. "Why do you think you were stabbed in your past life?"

I pull your hand off of me and lift up the bottom of my shirt, showing the jagged birthmark on my hip, right past the bone, just where the flesh and muscle of my lower abdomen starts. The Mark curls on one end, and it's a unnaturally dark shade of pink.

"I read a story once about a boy in England who was born with a wine stain across the crown of his head. It went from the very top of his head to just above his eyebrow. He told his mother, without being frantic, perfectly calmly, that he was killed by a blow to the head. Nothing about past lives; just 'Mommy, I was killed with a sword. It hit my forehead and that's all I remember.'

"A few years later, they unearthed Richard III and found out that he had been killed by a sword crushing his skull, right where the little boy said he had been killed. Right where his wine-stain was. Apparently a lot of cultures believe that birthmarks show the tales of our past lives."

"You think an English toddler was the reincarnation of Richard III? That's way better than thinking you were stabbed."

You blew it off with a laugh, with no harsh feelings behind it. But still, after that, everyday I came home, you pulled me towards you, buried your face in my right hip, and placed a soft kiss right where I had been stabbed. ○



Heart on my Sleeve (Stainless Steel) Kristen Woolard

Tragedy Informs Beauty

Catherine Carson

I.
I had a thought when—
a flashbulb breaks—
tragedy informs beauty.

A hurricane ravages a shore,
and people—an old woman,
a boy with skinned knees, a
mother-to-be—are swept away.

II.
But couples, young and in love,
(the kind who memorizes each other's
eyelids), get married with an
ocean background: calm,
gentle, a hazy sheet of glass
reflecting sky; it is always made
of glass as the lunar tides turn
shades of burnt rose.

III.
dust settles bodies
cradle bone soft
steady into velvet night
why
do my dreams come
coded in devastation
drenched in joy
dismantled into destiny



Bees (Lithograph) Aereen Lapuz

Afternoon Hike

T. Raya

I never liked hiking,
but the hills and dips of her body
made me think twice.

Life Lessons (From My Choir Director)

Erin Dailey

1. Breathe for where you are going, not for where you've been.
2. Make loud mistakes.

Habitus

Rishmita Aich

My grandmother had been old and wrinkled for the twenty years that I had known her. She had also been the prettiest and the kindest old lady I had known and will know for the rest of my life. It took me a couple of years—until I hit my early teens, to be precise—to realize that she had gathered an ample amount of admiration all her life for the exact same reasons. These were also the years when I started to associate a certain feeling of native domesticity with her. Like a Russian nesting doll, I would feel like the innermost doll that rests at the core, and my grandmother's arms, her house, the smell, and the town were all the outer dolls that engulfed me.

She was petite and plump, but her cheeks were rosy and full, and her face was devoid of any obvious age-defining lines. Her hands, though, were a criss-cross of wrinkles running from everywhere to everywhere. She had a staggering gait and she swayed from side to side with every step. She would hobble about the house in a spotless white sari with one hand resting on her waist to balance her stoop and the other telling the beads of her rosary. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her perfectly round, blushed face, and her lips constantly moved in inaudible prayer.

Nobody, not even my grandmother, casually talked about my grandfather unless I asked them to. My grandfather's portrait hung above the mantelpiece in the drawing room. He looked very different from the rest of us. His long, white beard covered the best part of his chest and he looked at least a hundred years old. He did not look the sort of person who would have a wife or children. He looked as if he could only have lots and lots of grandchildren.

My grandmother's house was located on the outskirts of Calcutta, a city where people often get stepped on if they don't keep up with the pace of it. I had started to sense the meanness of people from the very first day of school: mean teachers, mean friends, mean parents of friends, mean janitor, and the very mean lunch lady. It took me a couple of months

to turn into a homesick kid and I threw up even at the thought of getting ready for school in the mornings. The long distance between my grandmother's house and my school was always an assurance that if I slept over, I could excuse my way out of school the next day.

My grandmother and I had always shared a maternal bond, but we became friends after I started spending more time at her place than at my own house. She picked up on the homesickness and started to drive me to school everyday. The ride to school slowly turned into an adventure. My grandmother would stop at the bridge and feed the town dogs with stale bread, who would then bark and follow our car all the way from her home. She would spend her time reading scriptures at the temple that was closest to my school until classes ended. My grandmother helped me make friends within a wide spectrum of all age groups: teachers, classmates, dogs. She came to know all my friends' parents and often carpooled my friends to school and bought us ice-cream on the way. She had singlehandedly turned my cooped-up existence upside down, while my parents labeled my hankering for home as laziness.

A few years later, we moved to Delhi and a year later my parents called in for my grandmother, who was not to be left alone to live all by herself in Calcutta. That was a turning-point in our friendship. Although we shared the same room, my grandmother no longer came to school with me. I went to school in a bus with lots of other kids. There were no dogs in the streets and she took to feeding sparrows in the courtyard of our house in Delhi.

As the years rolled by, we saw less of each other. For some time, she continued to wake me up and get me ready for school, but I barely needed her help. I wouldn't want my hair to be braided anymore; I would put it up in a high ponytail or leave it down. I could sense her disapproval of my freshly acquired fashion sense.

One day, I announced that I had joined a music band in school after which she was very disturbed. To her, that kind of music had lewd associations. It was the monopoly of harlots and beggars and not meant for gentlefolk. She said nothing, but her silence meant disapproval. She rarely talked to me after that.

When my father got promoted, we moved to a bigger house. I was given a room of my own and my grandmother was presented with a sewing machine. The common link of our friendship was snapped. My grandmother accepted her seclusion with willful resignation. She rarely left her room to talk to anyone. From sunrise to sunset, she sat by her droning machine and recited prayers or hand-knit something warm. Only in the afternoon did she relax for a while to feed the sparrows. Once in a while, my eyes would just fixate on her while she sat in the verandah, breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected around her, creating a harmonious bedlam of chirpings.

When I decided to move to America for college, I was sure my grandmother would be upset. I was going away for years, and at her age one could never tell—but my grandmother could. She was not even sentimental. She came to leave me at the airport but did not talk or show any emotion. Her lips moved in prayer, her mind was lost in prayer. Her fingers were busy telling the beads of her rosary. Silently, she kissed my forehead, and when I left, I cherished the moist imprint as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between us.

Years later at school, I learnt about the concept of habitus, which states that the cause of people's deeply ingrained habits, skills, or dispositions often stem from their past experiences. My grandmother's seclusion was exactly the same as my own habitus; we both resorted to isolation and tried to invent our own safe haven with what was left to us. She was homesick and had started to sense the meanness of the city: mean children, mean cultures, and a very mean grandchild.

I rushed back to India after my sophomore year of college when I was informed that my grandmother had taken ill. It was a mild fever and the doctor told us that it would go. But both my grandmother and I thought differently. She didn't recognize me but smiled at me, and for the first time, it dawned upon me what a great loss had occurred. She told us that her end was near. She said that since there were only a few hours before the close of the last chapter of her life left to pray, she was not going to waste any more time talking to us. We protested, but she ignored them. She lay peacefully in bed, praying and telling her beads. Even before we could suspect, her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers. A peaceful pallor spread over her face and we knew that she was dead.

We lifted her off the bed and, as is customary, laid her on the ground and covered her with a white shroud. However, after a few hours of mourning, we left her alone once again to make arrangements for her funeral, only to return in the evening with a crude stretcher.

The sun was setting and it had lit her room and verandah with a blaze of golden light. We stopped halfway in the courtyard. All over the verandah and in her room, right up to where she laid dead and stiff wrapped in the white shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. I noticed that there was no chirruping.

I felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When my grandmother was carried off, they flew away quietly. The next morning, I reminisced about my morning school rides with my grandmother when she fed the dogs on the way with the stale bread, as I swept the stale breadcrumbs into the dustbin. ○

10 of *Infinite* Sacred Spots on Earth

Hannah Keeton

inspired by Lauren K. Alleyne

A back porch where a table,
dead leaves, and every immaterial
thing you need
wait for you.

The whiskered cheek that becomes
whiskered jaw and whiskered throat.

The door that finally opens, the door
that finally closes, the door to the beach house warped
by rust and wet air and old wind.

The track before the race before the victory
before the roses before the accident
before the roses.

The sunlit room where two sisters living
two lives still dance to one song.

The cliffs between all of the green country
and all of the blue sea. One day.

Under your bed, where
the long-haired ghosts
and long-legged silverfish live;
bravely see them, bravely kill them.

Seventeen kids with kids stand
in gray hues, their smiles preserved in a photo,
in honey-thick hope.

Dogwood Park, the ribbon stream, the swing,
the road there. A child plays near
the slide. Splintered, free. It is you.

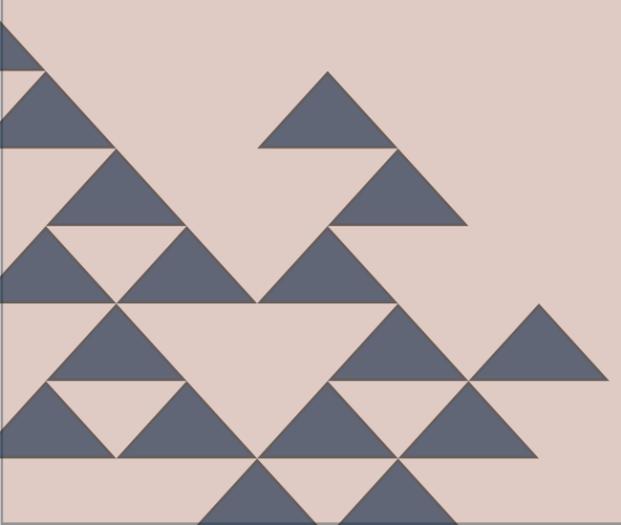
His hands, the blood-and-sawdust paste
in his knuckles, the garage where it's all built.



Waiting (Archival Inkjet Print) Emily Setelin



Patria Querida (Screenprint) Luis Antonio Navas-Reyes





Jackie Zerull

Lee (Screenprint on Newsprint) Jackie Zerull

A Tribute

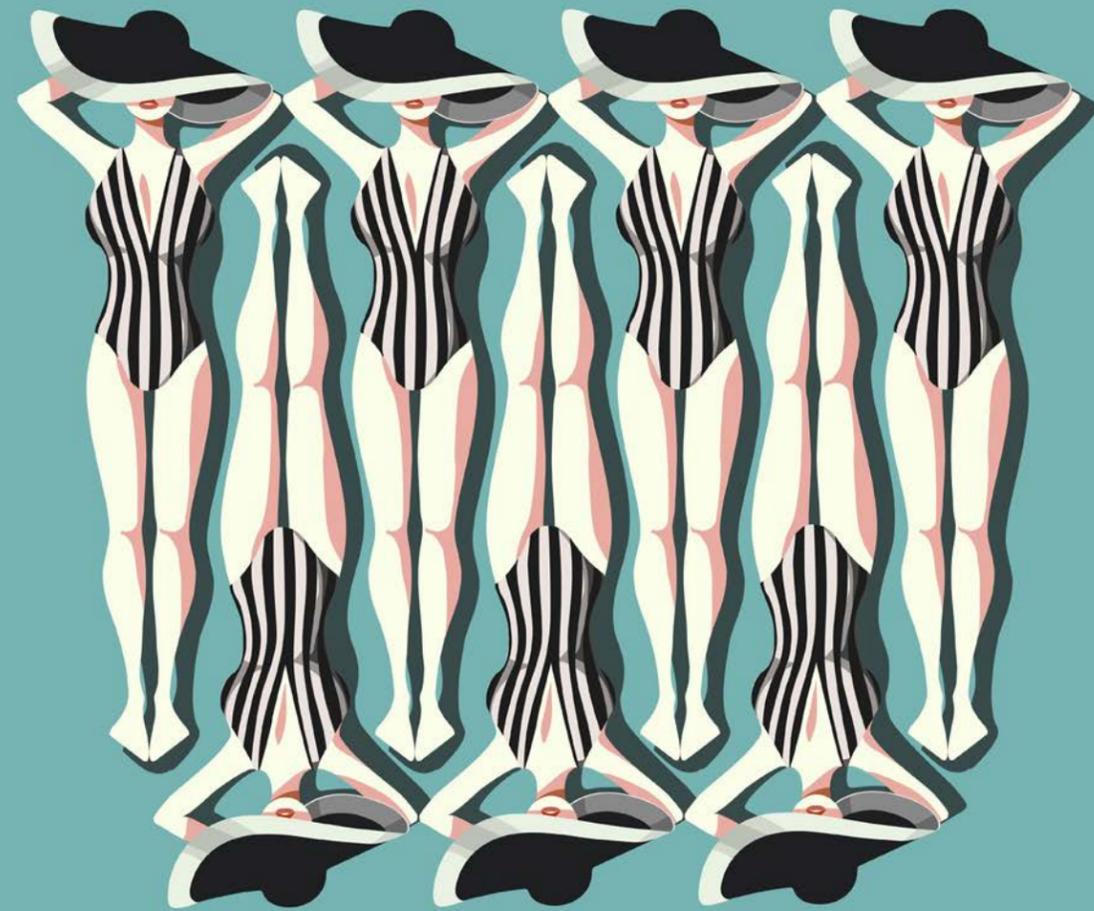
Claire Downey

My hands look just like my father's, broad with oddly-angled thumbs and thick knuckles. I used to hate them when I was younger. They could never look small and ladylike with pink nail polish, and pretty rings were never big enough. It's an understatement to say that I'll never be a hand model, but the true beauty is not in the image, but in the function.

Once I discovered that I could create something beautiful with the two things I hated most, they became the two things I loved the best. I learned how to make art. A press of a pen on paper could create a scrawled and looped universe outside my mind. I started to play stringed instruments. The pluck and press of a string could project the symphonies I heard in my head. That I could create an endless expression with fine motor skills was something I had never imagined before. How wonderful it was to discover I could make beauty from such ugliness.

However, the wonder also came with destruction. Every callous I earned from hours of bass and guitar practice had a counterpart. A press for perfection made my fingers clench. I'd crack my knuckles to bring relief but found myself continually cracking them out of habit. My knuckles swelled with my need to achieve. The hands that suddenly gave me purpose also had the power to tear me apart. I'd compulsively pick the scabs on my body and mind for reasons that still don't quite make sense to me. Perhaps it's because I didn't feel like the damage already done was anything worth healing, or maybe it was because I just wasn't yet ready to heal.

The capability of choice that can be encompassed in a pair of hands is endless both in love and hate. They are an extension of my family who has shaped the way they work, my friends who have taught me how to hold and be held, and of a God who knows them better than I do. So therefore I pay tribute to my hands, not because they are mine but because they were made for me. ○



Rhetorical Panacea

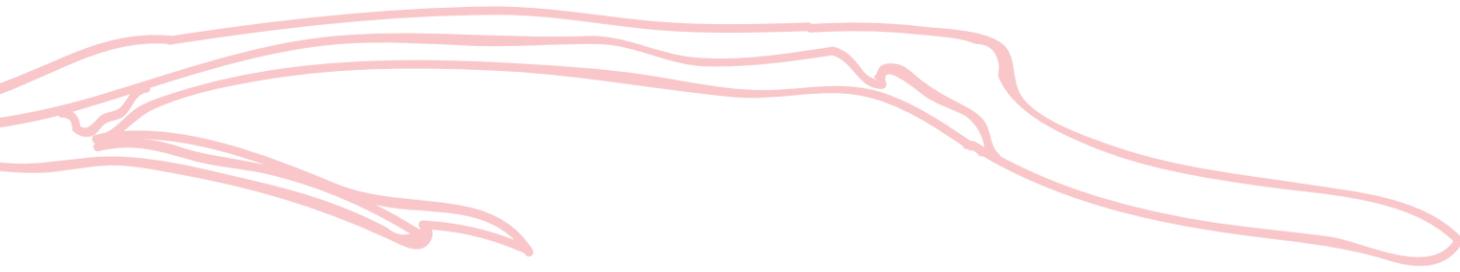
Alex Pickens

In the height of my hobbledyhoyhood I had a hankering
To establish a new world ordure without rankering
Not like the nast eructed by past hominoids, though:
Disseminated germs to phlebotomize a manifesto.

Flocks of lollygagging flibbertiggibits
And herds of troglodyte proselytes
Festooned my metaphysical Atlantis,
harbingers of a societal metamorphosis.

But the peculiar tingling sensation
of trying too hard to exist, a halation
of inverted existential led me to end all
by reflexologically stomping to look tall.

Like Dante in some chthonic carnival
Watching phantasmagoric Utopia fall
With rising anticlimactic force
I closed the thesaurus.



Red-Winged Blackbird (Embroidery Thread on Branches) Caley English

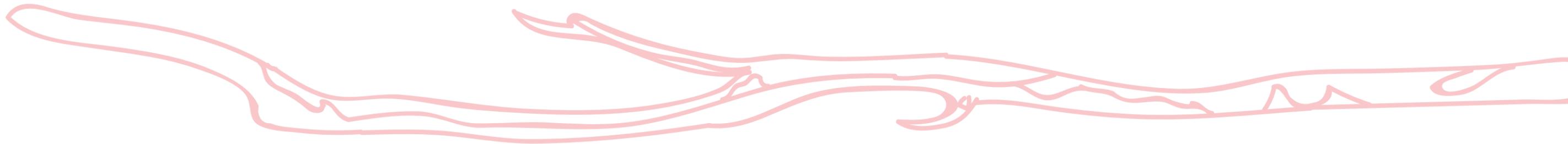
Evergreen

Lauren Ferry

Evergreens
endure with
roots strong
and deep,
for all is
ephemeral
but you
and the clear
breeze.

Centuries tall,
scented sweet,
you fill the
air with ease
while the years
engrave and
bind you to
the vows of
the carefree.

Though December
May envy,
bend your limbs
under the freeze.
Remember
winter gives
way, but
you prevail
Eternally.





Push and Pull (Oil Paint, Liquid Gold Leaf, India Ink on Wood) Rebecca Sullivan

Ode to My *Flat Ass-ets*

Taylor DeRossett

Oh you, you with your
cereal-box chest,
a wooden board,
unstained, pale,
grain fused with red
chagrin and purple veins.

Heart so big, you can see
its Looney Tunes outline
protruding from underneath
your collarbone,
thump, thump, thumping.
Eyes constantly shifting down,
thump, thump, thumping.

Foolish heart so big
it beats against your chest
with balled up, toddler-sized fists.
Breasts doing their best impression
of a sunny-side up egg
Foolish breasts,
too stupid to grow.
Don't they know
what a woman
should look like?

The other day,
you walked out of the elevator.
You walked out of the elevator,
head already bent ninety degrees,
hair over your eyes.
You did not smile at the man

who offered you a smile.
You did not see him.
You just walked.

You are an expert
at hunching your shoulders,
at bringing your knees to your chest.
You say being short is awesome.
You say you can always bring
a step-stool,
but no hiding place is too small for you.

When the serial killer comes into your
house,
You run to the kitchen—
not to grab a butcher knife,
but because you know
you can fit in the cabinets if you
fold your body like a
collapsible car seat.

You know because you practiced
in your bedroom closet last night.

And your lines, straight
lines, me-cha-ni-cal pencil
lines, silver insides.
Easily erased and
always impermanent.

Rubber eraser over
your cheekbones, your eyelids.

Purple crescent moons
tracing your lower lashes.
Where diamonds gather—
flashes of light and life.

Mom sitting on the front porch.
Sitting, eyes on a thundering skyline.
Sitting, not saying a word,
heart thump, thump, thumping.

Bones peeking out
from your spine and elbows—
you are not ashamed of them.
They are made of steel.
They keep your spine straight,
head up, shoulders back,
arms crossed, fists clenched.

Your bones are your weapons,
proof of your survival.
In a world hell-bent on grinding
your spirit into
dust and salt,
you are adamantine.

Heart so big, beating so loud,
thump, thump, thumping.
Don't you know?
That's what a woman
should look like.

Even though no one else in his family really cared for it, Owen had always loved the Olympics. By the time he was sixteen, he had watched a couple of them, but had mostly experienced the more common competitions like swimming and gymnastics. During the one when he was sixteen, he caught some of the archery competition for the first time. He was impressed by how calm and quiet the archers were. As they drew back their bowstrings, they drew in his attention. Their ability to achieve something as precise as shooting a bullseye amazed him. He could never be motionless long enough for something like that. Everyone else knew it, too. It had been such a minor moment, but he could easily remember the one morning when he was 5, sitting at the breakfast table, and the sharpness of his father's voice snapping, "Can't you sit still, you're giving me motion sickness." For Owen, being mindlessly energetic was such a default state of being that the control of an Olympic archer seemed superhuman.

As the gold medal match in men's team archery between the United States and South Korea played out, Owen sat on the floor between the T.V. and the coffee table. His dad was in his armchair on the other side of the table, behind Owen, and Owen's older brother stood in the living room doorway. "Rifles are so much better," he said. "You can't tell me the sound of a gun firing isn't awesome." Owen's brow wrinkled as he tried to ignore his brother.

The match was finishing, and the USA was only going to take the silver. "Should've gotten gold," his dad said. Owen was still impressed by both teams regardless of his brother's or dad's opinions. Over the course of the whole competition, Owen had wondered more and more if he could ever do even half of what those athletes did, and with the South Koreans now declared winner and his dad in the room, he decided to take a chance to maybe find out.

"You know," Owen started, turning around on the floor to face his dad, though he couldn't look him in the eye, "it could be cool to get a bow," he hesitated a moment, "for, like, my birthday or something." He hugged his knee into his chest.

"Rifles are still better," his brother said, turning and walking into the kitchen to find some food to scarf down.

"I don't know," his dad yelled to his brother, "maybe if I get him one, we can finally get him out hunting with us for once."

That really wasn't the point, Owen thought. If he had to deal with that part of his father later, he would, but first things first. Owen looked his father in the eye this time

and arched an eyebrow to re-ask his request.

"We'll see," was all he said.

A few weeks, a chocolate-on-chocolate cake, and torn brown and green camouflage wrapping paper later, Owen had a bow, arrows, and a practice target. He had even gone along with his father's expectation that he get a hunting license, thinking that it might be enough to buy him some time before he had to figure out how to tell them he didn't really want to go. Where they lived, hunting was a way of life. It was culture. It was tobacco spit and muddy cowboy boots. It was unwarranted arrogance and sitting on a pick-up truck's tailgate, seeing who could act like the cockiest dumbass. And it was too much for Owen. Guys like that at school, like his brother, like his dad, they were all like widespread buckshot. Owen wanted far more to be the refined arrow.

It was about skill.

After school, before his dad and brother got home from work, Owen would go out into the backyard to target shoot. He was never worried about his mom seeing him because she had always let him do whatever interested him, as long as he didn't get into trouble. Owen did not want his brother or dad watching him shoot, though. He had been practicing a few months now, and he was still annoyed that the best he could shoot was the 5-ring. But at least he didn't miss the target entirely much anymore.

The single time Owen had tried shooting on the weekend, a month ago, his dad was there, complete with commentary. "At this rate, taking you hunting would be a waste of time." Owen stood in the wake of the statement, still facing the target, listening to the clacking of his dad's boots on the patio behind him as he walked back in the house.

Today, though, Owen had the backyard to himself. Their house was a few hundred feet from the edge of the woods. The tall trees on one side and the house on the other made the backyard into a pocket where Owen could hit three arrows in the 3-ring in a row and not worry about anyone but himself knowing. The sun was starting to make everything golden, and it wouldn't be long before his dad would be home. Maybe a few more shots before packing up.

Owen nocked an arrow and took aim at the target. His eyes narrowed and his sight tightened progressively through each of the concentric rings of the target until he was focused on the center. Before he could fire, he saw a bit of movement in his periphery, so he lowered his bow and turned to look. A deer, an eight-point buck even, walked into the backyard from the woods. Owen had looked out of his bedroom window and seen deer in

the yard many times, but he had never been in the yard with one before. The buck must not have noticed Owen, as it kept walking slowly, nibbling on grass. Owen did not move. As the buck walked, the curves of his thigh muscles flexed underneath his skin, revealing the deer's capability to escape from whatever threats might present themselves.

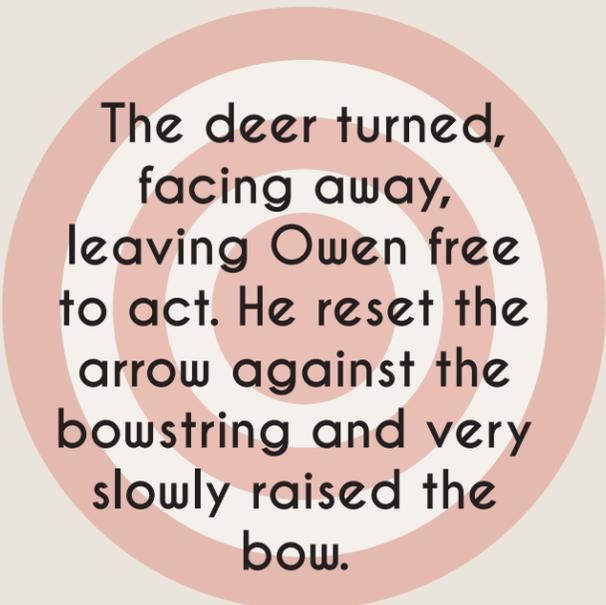
The deer kept walking into the yard and soon was closer to Owen than the target. Owen wondered how the deer had not seen him yet; the buck seemed more calm than he should have been with a human standing right there. Owen barely breathed, thinking too large a breath would send the deer running back into the woods. His appreciation for nature might have been different from that of others, including his dad, but Owen still felt a need to connect with the natural world, and he had never felt this connected before.

Owen knew exactly what all the guys at school, what his brother, what his dad would do in this moment. He knew his dad would expect him to do it too and could almost hear his father telling him to "man-up." Maybe if he did, his dad would finally recognize something he had done as an accomplishment in a way that had never happened with any of his good grades or local swimming trophies.

The deer turned, facing away, leaving Owen free to act. He reset the arrow against the bowstring and very slowly raised the bow. He pulled back the string and, at the furthest extent of the draw, anchored his palm to the side of his chin. The muscles of his forearm, his biceps, and shoulder turned to stone. His legs turned to tree trunks and his feet rooted into the earth. His back was straight. And there stood the deer.

The buck turned back toward him and stood in a position that gave Owen a perfect broadside shot. He could see the arrow's path clearly. With what little training he had undergone in getting his hunting license, he knew that in this position, he should aim at the deer's heart. In the chance that the deer heard the bowstring snap or the arrow cut through the air, his reflexive crouch down would still cause him to get shot in the lungs. But then the buck again turned slightly, quartering away from Owen. He looked up, off into the distance, still unexpectedly calm, like there was no threat there at all.

The sound of his heart beating drummed loudly in Owen's ears, and he had to force himself to take a breath. He adjusted his aim, drawing a line up the deer's front, right leg, setting his target halfway up the buck's body. The shot was there. He could kill. He could become a hunter. He easily imagined how tight his dad's grip would be for a properly manly handshake, how booming his dad's voice would be saying his congratulations. How proud his dad would be, telling everyone he knew that his son took down a buck the very first chance he got. But Owen also imagined how the deer would feel with a metal shaft puncturing him, bleeding internally and bleeding out,



The deer turned, facing away, leaving Owen free to act. He reset the arrow against the bowstring and very slowly raised the bow.

gasping desperately for breath. He might try to escape into the woods, but he'd eventually grow too weak. He'd fall, his last few moments spent cold and afraid.

Owen relaxed his arm and lowered his bow.

I don't want to. I don't want to kill him.

As Owen relaxed his stance, sending all tension out of him and leaving a warmth flowing into every now-relaxed muscle, the buck turned back toward him. He looked directly at Owen. He stood tall, chest broad and outward, and Owen realized that he had adjusted his posture similarly. He finally took a deep breath. He did not blink; it felt like the deer wasn't just looking at him, but into him. Slowly, the buck turned and started walking back into the woods.

Owen watched the deer until he could no longer see him and then sat down on the ground. He laid his bow off to the side and fell backward. Every drop of energy drained out of his body and down into the earth. He could feel his heartbeat echo into the ground, a pulse of nature he was fully a part of. He stayed laying there, and breathing the chilling Autumn evening air. He finally stood and picked up his bow. He loved how it felt simultaneously rigid and flexible, how there was strength in a curve. He still thought the bow was elegant, even if it originated as a means to kill, even if most people still used it to do so.

I don't have to be a hunter in order to be a bowman. It is about skill. He ran his hand through his hair. Okay, one last shot.

He nocked the arrow. He thought of the calm of the buck and allowed tension into his muscles—only the precise amount needed. He aimed with a surety he had never felt in any of his target practice before. He let the arrow fly. ○

The Widow

Catherine Carson



Eclipse (Photography) Addison Bryant

The five o'clock moon looked like a stamp in need of ink, blotted edges in need of color, she said.

I think of her: the dunked witch, the lousy harlot, the widowed woman. How she couldn't write, how they laughed when she walked head-down, how she must fast on the eleventh day of the moon.

She wore only white, the color of mourning, her hair short and boyish as she laid down her dying husband among the Ganges water.

The eight o'clock moon looked thumb-punched, she said. A perfect hole in a thick sea of sky.

A Deaf Man and a Mother's Hug

Sarah Koth

I sat on a blue, plastic chair behind a square desk just big enough for an iPad and my to-go coffee cup. From behind that desk, faces grew more familiar, stories continued to the next chapter, and volunteers escorted guests. They needed food, we had food to offer. They needed help, we were there to help. Act, react.

But the numbness became a pins-and-needles sensation in my chest as I started to wake up. I learned about two new languages on a Tuesday afternoon.

I set up the small desk with the iPad and grabbed a pad of paper and a couple of pens. My desk marked a checkpoint for gathering information: where they lived, which adults had dependent children, their date of birth. I made sure to have two or three "birthday bags" for such occasions. Checking off the boxes to prepare for the afternoon, I sat down with a fresh cup of coffee.

A volunteer told me that I would check-in a gentleman guest ("guest," not "client") who was deaf. While he usually brought someone along as an interpreter, they wanted me to know ahead of time in case someone didn't come with him. *All you have to know is if his information was correct. Don't worry, you'll be fine.* As though I would be the one at a disadvantage.

The check-in volunteer pointed him out; he wore a camouflage baseball cap. Seeing him through the open door, I grabbed a pad of paper and wrote: Hello, I'm Sarah, the summer intern. How are you today?

As the man stood in front of me, I saw his eyes bounce around, his hands fiddle together, and his shoulders remain stiff in a pale green t-shirt. I handed him the notepad and a pen. Smiling, I watched him, conveying the expectation that he

would sit down and we would have a full-blown conversation. He took the chair beside me and jotted a short note on the pad.

I'm good, how are you?

I'm well, thanks! I see in your info that you have a kid at home, how is he?

His hand hovered about three feet off the floor and began to raise it slowly, chuckling.

We wrote more, checked his information together, and as he left, he looked me in the eye as he waved goodbye.

Language one: Intentional Validation.

The pantry closed at 1:30 p.m. sharp. The director explained that people needed to be on time, held to that standard, and she couldn't ask volunteers to stay past their time commitment. Such a system worked most days.

1:20 p.m.: A mother wrote down two of her children's information on the green sheet. As I typed it in the system, I saw that one of the children had a recent birthday, and I showed her the gift bags beside me. Her brown eyes widened and shimmered as she smiled. After she left, volunteers began stacking chairs and debriefing the afternoon.

1:35 p.m.: The mother returned, her hands fluttering. In a thick accent, she asked if it was too late to get another gift bag for another one of her children. *Of course not! Come with me.* She pressed a palm on the side of her mauve hijab, thanking me before I had even given her the gift. I smiled and led her back through the waiting room into the pantry where the volunteers had gathered. The director asked her a few questions about what she wrote on her file, reminding her that she needed to include all her children and information. She assured that she would,

and I handed her the bag. Then she drew me into a front-to-front, lean-in, kind of hug that only mothers can give.

Language two: Bold Gratitude.

I didn't work at the pantry to feel good about myself or to learn new languages. I wanted to understand how food pantries met needs, how they function.

I didn't apply for the job expecting that I could be anything more than a passing face. I wanted to share a smile and restock the canned vegetables.

I expect so little of people, I think indifferently. But the Lord used a Deaf man and a mother's hug to slap my numbness awake.

The mother wanted each of her children to feel special, valued, and loved. A little bag of cake mix and paper party plates would serve a sweet celebration of life. May her home be safe and full of compassion. (A front-to-front, lean-in, kind of hug.)

The man probably lives in a misunderstood silence. Perhaps he feels nervous that people will be impatient with him instead of empathizing—not sympathizing—and meeting him on level ground. May he be validated and heard. (Looked me in the eye as he waved.)

Compassion crosses all languages. At times, it functions as its own language; it's rare to encounter and it leaves non-native speakers speechless. May we slow down. May we listen to understand rather than respond. May we stop using language that makes us less valuable than our true worth. May our words be words of life, truth, empathy, and may they precede compassion in action. May we advocate love on behalf of those who struggle to voice their deepest needs, desires, and what they have to offer the world. ○

French Flowers
(Watercolor)
Brigitte Criqui

Constellations

Hannah Keeton



Mayan Blue (Screenprint) Luis Antonio Navas-Reyes

It was a soft night leaking like dark milk,
like maroon ink, like velvet moss. There
were stars like tight seeds, like little, wet
gems, like spiders with young legs and
small fiber-hairs and eyes and eyes and
eyes in constellations of old Greek bodies
littering that far wilderness. Trees like
screaming veins, like our own fingers.
There we were.

WHITE — OUT

T. Raya



Grip (Lithograph) Aereen Lapuz

I find myself in bed with a stranger.
I know what I am doing,
but I don't know why.
I don't know when I started
using boys like white-out,
trying to erase the touch
of the last one
with the touch of the next one—
the touch of a new lover.

But can I call it that?

Can I call them that?

I laid with one whom I thought I loved,
only to have scars that extended
from my wrists to my heart.

I laid with the next to erase the first
and realized he wanted feelings
I could not give in return.

To learn that sensation is dulled
with the absence of love.

So last night,

I laid with a stranger
who I did not love.

Who did not love me.

Who did not tell me I was beautiful
as he traced the outline of my curves.

Who did not handle me gently.

And again,

I let him be my white-out.

Now I fear the layers of white-out
that I have stacked on top of one another.

Grey with old ink stains,
splotching a piece of delicate paper
I once knew as myself.

The History of Nonsense
(Collage on Paper)
Sophia Laila Cabana



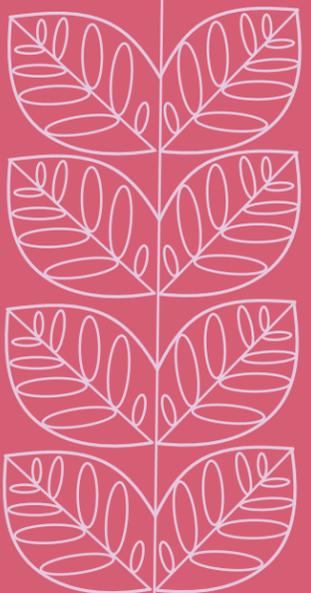
America, I Am

Sophia Laila Cabana

America, I am your face, whether you wish to wear me
or not—
regardless of your willingness to bear me,
I am here.

I am America, my home,
my Mecca and Medina,
where my father's ancestors have walked since 1620,
lost in their search for God, for praise, for money—
America, where my grandfather, the refugee,
became the first of my mother's family
to press his bones into American clay,
an ambassador of Afghanistan, even to this day.

America, my Mecca and Medina,
where I was born,
where I will lie someday.





Sacred Hands (Acrylic on Canvas) Martha Hemingway

Leftovers

Marina Shafik

Dinner in my family's home is open. No one's plate receives a moment's safety from its neighbor; when the food comes out, it's visually similar to a battlefield. We loudly offer food to each other, reaching our hands across the table when someone else's potatoes look better than our own or when we try to scrape leftovers onto another's plate to avoid wasting any morsel. "Do you want to try this?" and "Bring me your plate" and "Are you going to finish that?" jab their way into the conversation, breaking up the pleasantries. We talk with our mouths full and it's okay to eat with your hands sometimes. It's messy and loud and if you don't loosen your belt afterwards, you did it wrong.

The food on our plates dances from person to person. Everything we have is communal, flexible, potentially fleeting; if you don't finish the food in front of you, someone else will. Plates and knives and forks clatter, adding to the volume of the already-louder-than-normal conversations. Don't worry if you didn't get a chance to add rice to your plate—you're expected to take a forkful of someone else's. When someone bakes, there is never just one cake or a few cupcakes made. Our neighbors taste everything we taste, because why have food at all if you can't share it? Some of them return the favor, and we get to try chicken legs cooked with Indian spices and the occasional banana bread. Some neighbors don't return the favor, and that's their prerogative, but I wonder how they can enjoy their food.

The first time I had dinner at a friend's house, she looked at me strangely when I offered her my food. She didn't offer hers. Their utensils somehow never clattered on their plates, there were no interruptions while one person spoke, and the combat zone I had grown accustomed to at home was nowhere to be found. When the quiet dinner had finished, I followed suit as the rest of her family scraped their leftovers into the trash. ○



Bozo (Archival Inkjet Print) Emily Setelin

Why I Didn't Stay Angry

★★★

Hannah Via

Right now,
Somewhere,
A black hole is rocketing
through space
at speeds you and I
can barely fathom.

It devours everything it touches.
It defies time,
matter,
God.

Once, this eater of worlds
had been a star-
20 times the size
of our own sun.

It had thrown its light
into the universe, suspended
in warmth.

Until finally, it collapsed
under its own weight,
suddenly unable to bear
its own brilliance any longer.

Some things are too good
for the Universe to hold.

This is what I think of
when I think back to the storm,
and the phone call,
and the way your voice sounded
on each syllable of
"I never loved you";

That though you may now be
as dark to me as that infinite blackness which
hurtles itself, uncaring, through space,

Black holes were not always black holes.



MASKS ON

Erin Dailey

And so here we are, actors and actresses of the highest caliber—each of us plagued with unhappiness and still pretending that we've got it all figured out.

And so here we are, burning our throats with liquor, burning our lungs with smoke. Here in our diurnal course, trying to escape mundanity, or make others believe we are happy, or make ourselves believe it.

And so here we are, in a grungy, old basement littered with bottles and cans, smelling of sweat and beer, music blaring so loudly that it drowns out everything else—this is what we want. Drown it all out, the whole world obscured by a single, pulsing rhythm.

Here we are, boys with flushed faces, girls with painted ones. Everyone pretending, performing, lying to each other, to themselves.

And so here we are.

Lights off.

Masks on. ○ ○ ○

art series

Sometimes, art is more than just one piece. Visit our blog to see four amazing art series.

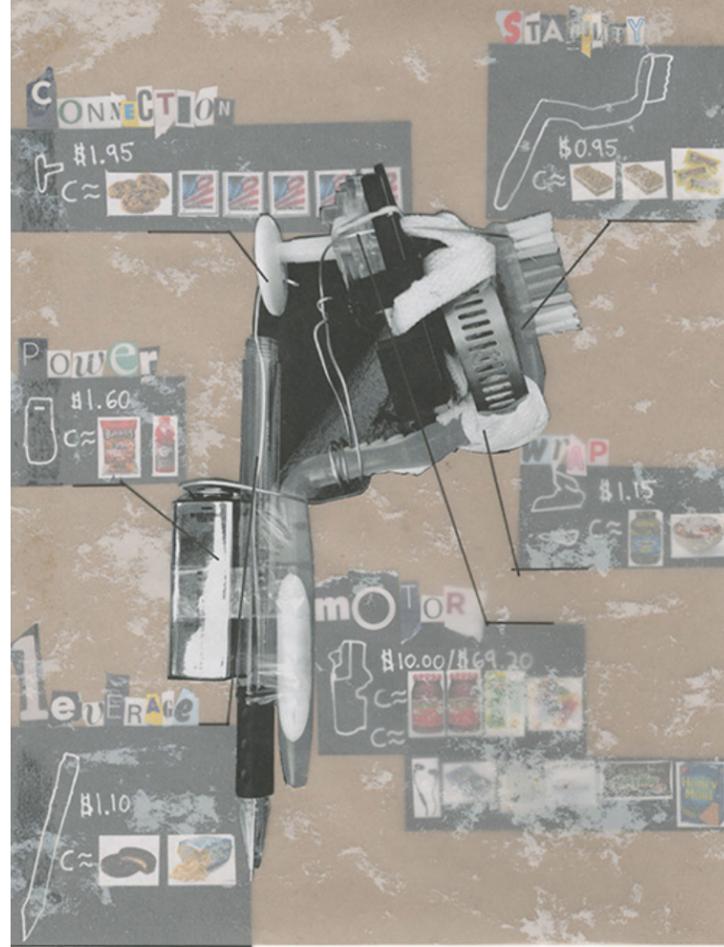
jmuGardyLoo.org/blog

Upper Left: *Untitled* (Chipboard, Mylar, Pen, and Magazine Clippings) Abby Gwin (from the *Behind Bars* series)

Upper Right: *Green* (Photography, Makeup, Popsicle sticks, Paper, Feathers) Crimsyn (from the *RGB* series)

Lower Left: *Sunset in Busan* (Digital Photograph) kfcvf (from the *A Weekend in Busan* series)

Lower Right: *Endoplasmic Reticulum* (Cloisonne Enamel on dye-formed copper plates) Rebecca Sullivan (from the *Kindred Seeds of Life* series)





The names and numbers listed below are the designers of each set of pages. These staff members created the layout of these pages, but not the content.

i.	Katja Wisch	25 & 26	Kayleigh Bishop
ii. & iii.	Kathryn Walker	27 & 28	Kathryn Walker
iv. & v.	Kathryn Walker	29 & 30	Aereen Lapuz
vi. & vii.	Isabella Lassiter	31 & 32	Katja Wisch
1 & 2	Aereen Lapuz	33 & 34	Kayleigh Bishop
3 & 4	Taylor DeRossett	35 & 36	Catherine Carson
5 & 6	Isabella Lassiter	37 & 38	Catherine Carson
7 & 8	Hannah Burgess	39 & 40	Isabella Lassiter
9 & 10	Kathryn Walker	41 & 42	Jonah Howells
11 & 12	Kathryn Walker	43 & 44	Isabella Lassiter
13 & 14	Katja Wisch	45 & 46	Katja Wisch
15 & 16	Kathryn Walker	47 & 48	Jonah Howells
17 & 18	Katja Wisch	49 & 50	Lauren Ferry
19 & 20	Kathryn Walker	51 & 52	Isabella Lassiter
21 & 22	Kathryn Walker	53 & 54	Aereen Lapuz
23 & 24	Kathryn Walker	55	Isabella Lassiter